



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.2413 | FAX (517) 373.5144

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/allen/

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Contact: Jamie Callahan
1-866-525-5637

Sen. Allen introduces legislation to create new program to combat invasive species, improve water quality

LANSING – A bill to help fund water quality improvements for inland lakes was introduced in the Michigan Senate Thursday, said Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City.

“Keeping Michigan’s waters pristine and free from aquatic nuisance species is a perpetual battle,” Allen said. “This legislation would set up a unique funding tool to help keep our waters clean and would make those tools available to local governments so they can be even better stewards of our abundant water resources.”

Sponsored by Allen, Senate Bill 1159 would create a Water Improvement Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA).

The TIFA would operate similar to other tax increment financing authorities, but would be established around inland bodies of water for it would be used to fund water quality improvement measures such as combating invasive species, pollution cleanup, and leveraging dollars for sewer and storm water systems.

Because many bodies of water tend to be boundaries between municipalities, SB 1159 allows for multi-jurisdictional TIFA districts.

Allen developed the legislation after looking for ways to assist Fife Lake in its efforts to eradicate the milfoil that has infested the lake. During that process, it was discovered that there was a lack of funding available for such efforts.

“In looking for a way to address this issue, we developed a plan that would take a successful economic development tool and modify to help the environment,” Allen said. “We must do whatever we can to help protect Michigan’s waters.”

SB 1159 was referred to Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs.

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